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This Supplement consists of a VERBATIM Report, specially drawn up for "India," of the Debates on Indian subjects in both Houses of Parliament, and questions put on such subjects and the answers given to them, arranged chronologically, from March 23rd to April 23rd.

Imperial Parliament.

March 23rd.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

BRITISH SOLDIERS IN INDIA.

Colonel LOCKWOOD asked the Secretary of State for War whether he was in possession of facts confirming a statement from the Calcutta correspondent, which appeared in the *Times* of 18th March, that more than 3,000 British soldiers were constantly in hospital from venereal disease; that the rate of admission to hospital from that cause had risen in 1895 to 511 per 1,000; and that out of a force of 70,000 men only 26,000 had not suffered from it; and whether the Commander-in-Chief in India had made any representation on the subject.

Mr. BRODRICK: The figures quoted in the question are substantially accurate. The subject is one which has been the subject of representations at intervals by the Commander-in-Chief in India.

March 26*th.*

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

EAST INDIA (INCOME AND EXPENDITURE).

In accordance with the Address moved by Sir HENRY FOWLER on March 20th, a Return relative to East India (Income and Expenditure) was presented, and ordered to lie upon the Table.

POSTAL ORDERS.

Mr. HENNIKER HEATON asked the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster-General, whether Postal Orders issued in the United Kingdom were payable in Constantinople, Malta, and Gibraltar, but not in Australia, Canada, or other great colonies:

Whether Postal Orders issued in India, the Straits Settlements, and Newfoundland were payable in this country; while Postal Orders issued in this country were not payable in India, the Straits Settlements, Newfoundland, Canada, South Africa, or India:

And whether, in pursuance of an intimation previously given, he would consider the advisability of establishing a uniform exchange of Postal Orders between the Mother country and her colonies and dependencies.

Mr. HANBURY: The position was fully explained in answer to a question asked by the hon. member on the 21st of July, 1893, and as lately as the 27th of last month he was informed that the subject was engaging the Postmaster-General's attention.

MADRAS LAND REVENUE ADMINISTRATION.

Sir WILLIAM WEDDERBURN asked the Secretary of State for India if he would grant a Return of evictions, sales for recovery of land revenue, and other matters regarding the Madras land revenue administration in the form in which notice had been given.

Lord GEORGE HAMILTON: I have not at present the information asked for by the hon. baronet, but if he wishes it, I will write to the Government of Madras and request them to furnish it.

THE INDIAN MINTS.

Mr. KIMBER asked the First Lord of the Treasury whether, before making any international engagement on the subject of re-opening the Indian mints and keeping them open for free coinage of silver, he would give the House and country the opportunity of considering the proposals and their effect:

And whether he could obtain information through any of the Government departments as to what was the amount of silver now lying idle in the treasuries of the United States, and of France and Germany respectively.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I should be unwilling to pledge the Government on the subject mentioned in the question. It will be remembered that the principal alteration in our sy[illegible] which was promised by the Chancellor of the Exchequer [illegible] relation to an international agreement had reference to t[illegible] opening of the Indian mints. Now the Indian mints w[illegible] closed without the consent of Parliament, and I do not kn[illegible] why Parliament should be consulted if the mints were ag[illegible] opened. With regard to the second paragraph, I have [illegible] official information at my disposal which would enable me [illegible] give with any feeling of security the question put to me by m[illegible] hon. friend. But so far as I can make out, there are a[illegible] present in the treasury of the United States ninety-six million sterling of silver, against which there are notes in circulation for the whole amount less eight millions. That is to say, there are eighty-eight millions of silver notes against ninety-six millions of silver in the treasury. In Germany there are no returns issued of which I am able to avail myself. As to France, on March 19th last there were fifty millions of silver in the Bank of France, but notes were issued against the whole of this amount.

Mr. KIMBER: The right hon. gentleman has not answered my question as to whether, before entering into any engagement, the Government will give the House and the country an opportunity of considering the proposal.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I thought I had indicated to my hon. friend that I did not propose to give any pledge on the subject. As far as my experience goes, the House of Com-

mons always finds some opportunity for discussing any matter of interest. But I should not like to pledge the Government to bring the question before the House before they arrived at a decision.

March 27th.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

EAST INDIA (INCOME AND EXPENDITURE).

The Return presented yesterday, relative to East India (Income and Expenditure), was ordered to be printed.

INDIAN MUTINY VETERANS.

In the discussion of the Army Estimates, in Supply, on the vote for £1,357,800 for Chelsea and Kilmainham Hospitals, Colonel Murray asked whether there were any men who had served in the Crimea and Indian Mutiny still remaining who had not received a pension?

Mr. Brodrick said that as to Crimean and Indian Mutiny men, the present regulations had been drawn so that undoubtedly a considerable number of men who had served in the Crimea were necessarily excluded, but so far from it being the case that there were few of those old soldiers, he showed that at the last computation there were 16,000 of them still in existence. If they proceeded, however, to pension the whole number, it would entail a charge of something like a million. For that reason the War Office had gone as far as it could to induce the Treasury to meet the hardest cases, and those were now coming in at the rate of fifty to a hundred per month.

Major Rasch suggested that it would be politic to enlarge the operation of the system which applied to the Crimean and Indian Mutiny men. Some of those men had failed to obtain allowances from the War Office, and the fact that some of those men were to be seen walking about the streets with medals begging their bread, he believed acted as a deterrent to recruiting. The system of compassionate allowances was well enough as far as it went, but he submitted that it did not go far enough.

Mr. Brodrick said he should be only too glad to make any concession, but the difficulty was that these men were all men who might have continued their service for pensions but had not done so. The authorities had been most anxious to meet these hard cases, but to go beyond what had been done at present was more than they could properly ask the Treasury to undertake.

Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman presumed that the large number of men quoted included every man that could be counted. But a great many of these men had given but a small degree of service which could be called Crimean or ...utiny service. Many of them had gone out to the Crimea ...o India at the last moment, and had come back with...t seeing any service at all. He imagined that the reason ...ny the compassionate allowances were established by his ...redecessor at the War Office, and a service of ten years made ...ne of the conditions, was in order to be certain that the ...cipient had given some substantial service to the country. ...hese men all deliberately renounced the opportunity of ...erving on for pension, and therefore they had really no legiti...nate claim on the Army Fund, but with the view of preventing the scandal of seeing men who had served substantially and well in the Crimea in distressed circumstances and hanging about the streets, compassionate allowances were made. The limits of that fund had been stretched as far as possible, and if they went any further he thought they might as well throw open the door and say that any long-service man in the Army should get a compassionate allowance.

The vote was agreed to.

INDIAN COOLIES.

On the vote on account for £10,350,000, Mr. J. A. Pease moved to reduce the vote by £200 in order to call attention to the policy of the Government on the East Coast of Africa in relation to the question of slavery.

In the course of the debate Mr. George Curzon said: The hon. member seems to think that by a stroke of the pen you can import Indian coolies into Zanzibar to take the place of slave labour. I find that under existing regulations the Indian Government not only have it in their power, but they would be most reluctant to allow Indian coolies to serve under Arab employers. But even if this difficulty were overcome, you have all the questions arising out of the hiring of coolies, of their transportation, of the organisation of free labour, of the condition of the buildings in which they are to live, of medical supervision, and of hospitals for their careful tending. You have to see whether the employers could employ the men and pay them their wages. There will be the further danger that the large number of slaves who will take advantage of the abolition of the legal status may constitute a great temptation to the slave-owners on the mainland, and, whereas it can now be attempted, and with very remarkable success, to stop the importation of slaves from the mainland to the island, you have a serious reflux in the opposite direction—from the island to the mainland. Again, the bulk of the planters are unfortunately in the hands of usurers, who act in the most extortionate manner. The bulk of the estates are heavily mortgaged, and, supposing you diminish the labour supply in the way I have been speaking of, you would have these usurers in many cases foreclosing on the estates, and exacting, as far as they could, the utmost farthing. I submit we have no right to hand over a class, many of whom are exercising a legal right, to absolute ruin.

The amendment was by leave withdrawn.

THE SIAM AGREEMENT.

On the same vote Mr. Reginald McKenna called attention to affairs in Siam, with special reference to the recent Anglo-French declaration and its influence upon this country. He reminded the Committee of the position in 1893, when the treaty was entered into between France and Siam, by which a certain part of the latter country was surrendered to France. The British Government, by means stronger than words, asserted its interest in the integrity of Siam. We sent more than one gunboat into Siamese waters, not only to protect British industry in Bangkok, but to demonstrate British interests in the integrity of Siam. He quoted a letter addressed by the Singapore Chamber of Commerce to Lord Rosebery, warning the late Prime Minister that if the two provinces of Siem-rap and Patabang were wrested from Siam, a serious blow would be dealt at our trade, and heavy duties would be imposed. The present Under Secretary, too, speaking in 1893, after a personal visit, stated that the possession of the provinces was essential to Siam, and that the independence and integrity of the country would be irretrievably injured if they were allowed to pass into the hands of any foreign power. It was perfectly true, he said, that under the Anglo-French declaration the provinces of Siem-rap and Patabang had not been in so many words surrendered to France; but, to show that they had been practically surrendered, he had only to point to the words of the right hon. gentleman, the Under Secretary. He found that in 1893, when the French were already in possession of the town of Chantabun, the right hon. gentleman was considerably afraid that the possession of Chantabun by the French would lead to the acquisition of those provinces by that country. Now, the position as it existed then, however bad it was, had at any rate this advantage for the Siamese, that the British Government had declared its interest in the integrity of Siam. But under the declaration in question, the British Government had withdrawn its interest in the integrity of Siam as far as those two provinces were concerned. A forecast made by the right hon. gentleman that, if Great Britain did not preserve her interest in the integrity of Siam, those provinces would be lost to her, appeared to have been verified. The right hon. gentleman used words in a prophetic sense when, speaking of the occupation of Chantabun, he said: "I respectfully invite him (that was the late Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs) to keep his eye on Chantabun during the next few weeks and to pause until it has been evacuated before he congratulates the Government and the House upon having saved those provinces for the Siamese Government, and upon the fact that the French and Siamese question has been satisfactorily settled." He appealed to the right hon. gentleman to explain that language, in view of the fact that the French had still not evacuated Chantabun. He asked him whether, under these circumstances, he could reassure the House that the Anglo-French declaration did not, as a matter of fact, amount to an actual surrender of the two provinces mentioned.

Mr. CURZON in the course of his reply said: I welcome the opportunity of being permitted to say a few words upon the question of Siam. I am glad at last that the Government have been challenged in this House. (Hear, hear!) We have had a great deal of outside challenging by distinguished personages, and, notably, the late Prime Minister, who, commencing with a most moderate statement at the beginning of the Session, has emboldened himself speech by speech until, during the last few weeks, he has reached the point of talking of "the surrender of Siam." (Laughter.) If we had been guilty of any surrender of Siam I want to know what the deputy of the late Prime Minister, the right hon. gentleman opposite, has been doing during the last three months. (Hear, hear!) Parliament has been sitting since February 11, and if we have been guilty of this surrender of Siam, or even of British interests in Siam, why have we not had this question brought before the House——

Sir C. DILKE: I myself and two other hon. members raised it on the Address.

Mr. CURZON: Yes, but why have we not had it raised by official representatives on that Bench; why have we not had a formal Vote of Censure moved; why have we not had a day asked; why have we not had the adjournment of the House moved? (Cheers.) Why am I now to get up in the House and answer the mild speech which we have heard from the hon. gentleman opposite? (Laughter.) I wait to hear repeated in this House, or anywhere else where we can answer, not on the public platform, the charges against Her Majesty's Government for having sacrificed either British or Siamese interests, and when those charges are made I shall be ready to answer them. It is my duty, however, to deal with the specific points raised by the hon. member. His question is—"Why was the guarantee of Siam secured by the declaration limited, why did it not extend to the whole of the Siamese dominions?" We should have been glad to have guaranteed the whole of Siam; we were willing to give such a guarantee ourselves, but we were unable to procure it. The obstacle was that by the Treaty of 1893 Siam had ceded to France certain privileges and had been deprived of other privileges in that part of the country which lay outside the Menam basin. We accepted the *status quo*, but there was a special reason why the Menam basin was selected. It was stated by Lord Salisbury in his accompanying despatch that it was a part of Siam in which British trade is chiefly interested. Out of the whole of the British subjects in Siam, of whom there were over 10,000, a large proportion were miners, pedlars, shopkeepers, and small traders engaged in that part of the country. If we look at the question from the point of view of Siam itself, it is true that on the map the superficial area of the Mekong basin is perhaps greater than the Menam basin, but that gives no idea of the value of the territory; it only gives a notion of the extent. In order that the Committee may learn what the Menam watershed is as against the Mekong watershed, let me point out that out of 7,000,000 people in Siam, 5,000,000 live in the Menam basin. The export of rice from that part of the country is £2,000,000 a year, and teak £75,000; so that the area which we have guaranteed to France is on the one hand that part of the kingdom which is most important to British interests, and, on the other, most essential to the security, prosperity, and development of Siam. I pass to the next point. The hon. member in speaking of the provinces of Patabang and Ankor gave currency to a popular illusion, which it is most desirable should be corrected in this House. It is the illusion that under this agreement there has been what may be called a partition of Siam, that is to say, the creation and guarantee of a central zone and the erection of two spheres of influence possibly at some future day in possession on either side of the French on the east and the British on the south-west. I have often heard of the faculty that is possessed by ingenious persons of reading interpretations into treaties and Acts of Parliament which were not in the minds of the original designers; and I must say that it is the most ingenious, almost the most unscrupulous exegesis to read any such interpretation as that which the hon. member has suggested in this declaration before the House. Siamese rights remain intact over the whole of their dominions. They have not been added to and they have not been impaired by this dominion. France has not gained and Great Britain has not gained a single right under this agreement beyond that which either possessed before. If there should be any doubt I would refer hon. members to the view of Lord Salisbury declared in his accompanying despatch: "It might be thought that because we have engaged ourselves and have received the engagement of France not under any circumstances to invade this territory, that therefore we are throwing doubt upon the complete title and rights of the Siamese to the remainder of their kingdom, or, at all events, treating those rights with disregard. Any such interpretation would entirely misrepresent the intention with which this arrangement has been signed. We fully recognise the rights of Siam to the full and undisturbed enjoyment, in accordance with long usage or with existing treaties, of the entire territory comprised within her dominions, and nothing in our present action would detract in any degree from the validity of the rights of the King of Siam to those portions of his territory which are now affected by this treaty." The French Minister for Foreign Affairs, in a speech made in the French Chamber on February 24, said, "If certain parts of the kingdom of Siam remain outside the clause of reciprocal neutralisation the omission must not be interpreted as implying the idea of a formal partition of these regions between the two contracting Powers." In a speech closing the debate on February 27, he spoke as follows: "All the territories of the kingdom of Siam situated outside the basin of the Menam remain in exactly the same position as they were before." If those were the declarations of the two Ministers who signed this agreement, I fail to see where the opportunity for the interpretation of the hon. member comes in. Then I come to the surrender of the trans-Mekong possession of Keng-cheng. The hon. member spoke about the sacrifice of this great waterway. What did he mean? The great waterway of the Mekong is a waterway which no steamer has ever mounted or ever will mount, because there are rapids in every few miles of its course. It has never been navigated, and never will be navigated; but even if it were navigable we have not sacrificed it. Then the hon. member says, "Why have you surrendered Keng-cheng?" and Lord Rosebery in his speeches has made a great point about this surrender of British territory. Then with reference to this small slice of territory, about the sacrifice of which so much has been said, Lord Rosebery himself was prepared to give it away in 1891 as far as the buffer State; indeed, he proposed not only to give away that part of the line over the river, but also the part that lies on this side of the river. Let the Committee consider what is the character and extent of this territory alleged to be so wrongly surrendered. It is a small physical protuberance on the frontier of India; no trade route runs through it; it is from 14 to 21 days' distant from the nearest British military post; and it is cut off from communication with Burmah and India during the rains. On the other hand this trans-Mekong possession had certain attractions for France; it was contiguous to her territories and she also was unwilling to give it up. In order, then, to secure an easy and intelligible frontier between the two countries this small excrescence of territory was surrendered. It is 1,250 square miles, mostly composed of mountains, with very few plains scattered between, and is inhabited by about 3,000 people only. This is the full extent of the great sacrifice and of the terrible surrender of British interests which has supplied Lord Rosebery with more than one platform peroration during the last two months. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) Next, the Government have been asked why they did not by this agreement secure the evacuation by the French of Chantabun. Assurances have been given in this matter, and I am sure those assurances will not be lost sight of by the French Government. But I would again point out to the Committee that the question of Chantabun was regulated by the Convention between France and Siam in 1893. Our object was not to revise that Convention; it was a matter of agreement between France and Siam themselves. We accepted the then *status quo*, and the object we had in view was the security of Siam. The hon. member then went on to throw scorn upon the reciprocity of commercial advantages that had been granted in the provinces of Yun-nan and Szu-chuan, but I do not think that either England or France derives any special advantages from that part of the agreement. In one province France will have a slightly superior position, and in the other England will have a corresponding advantage. Commercial arrangements and reciprocity are the best possible guarantee that we can have for the development of this remote and interesting country without friction arising between two great countries trading with it. (Hear, hear.) I hope that in the few words I have said I have shown the Committee that in this matter there has been

no sacrifice of British interests on the one hand and no surrender of Siamese rights on the other. (Hear, hear.) I would here remind the hon. gentleman opposite that, while we have had Lord Rosebery going up and down the country talking of the surrender of Siamese territory and the sacrifice of British interests, the other night the right hon. gentleman the member for the Montrose Burghs, in his speech about Egypt, made the very important remark that he for one was delighted with the agreement relating to Siam. (Hear, hear.) In regard to British interests we have done that which ought to be the object of our policy in Siam, we abandoned the idea of creating a small and factitious buffer State in this remote region of the Upper Mekong—which was the object of the late Prime Minister—and we have given genuine protection to Siam by erecting for her a secure and intelligible frontier and this has been done without abrogating one tittle of the rights of Siam (Hear, hear.) After all, who are the persons, qualified to criticise or to express approbation of this Agreement? I imagine they are three in number only—the Siamese Government, the British traders in Siam, and the Indian Government. Well, the Siamese Government welcome the conclusion arrived at, and, on the whole, are satisfied with it; I have been in communication with British merchants and traders in Siam, and I can say on their behalf that they are satisfied with the Agreement; and I have reason to believe that the Indian Government are content with it. I wish to say before I sit down that I trust the remarks I have made will not be taken as implying that this Siamese Agreement is to be regarded as a British victory. I should be sorry to suggest any such view as that. For my own part I would prefer to eliminate from the consideration of the question all idea of conflict between two rivals such as England and France, in which one must necessarily be the gainer and the other the loser. I would regard it rather as a compromise, achieved, as all compromises must be, in a spirit of good will and concession.

Sir E. Ashmead-Bartlett did not propose to go into the questions debated between the two eminent gentlemen who represented the present and the late Governments on this question; it was quite apparent that both those gentlemen took somewhat different views of the position of this country in regard to Siam when they were in opposition to when they were in office. There had undoubtedly been great concessions made to France in the last Siamese Convention. When the subject was raised in the first debate of the Session he refrained from going into that question because he hoped the concession to France was, to use the words of the hon. baronet, part of a large settlement, and that by making it we were on the point of obtaining some corresponding concession from the Government of France, and easing and mitigating in some degree various European and other difficulties with which we were confronted. He objected to the concession of the country of which Mongsin was the capital because, only a few months ago, the British representative promised the tribes around that country that the country should never be given up. Sometimes promises of that kind had to be broken, and he did not propose to go, on this occasion, closely into the question of the various points of the concession to France made in the last Siamese Convention. He was, however, much surprised to find the hon. baronet objected to the policy of the Government on this point, because he remembered the period when the Government for which the hon. baronet was responsible, made concession after concession with regard to Siam, and got absolutely no *quid pro quo*, in fact, it was undoubtedly the very grave blunders made by Lord Rosebery's Government in 1893 which had led to the present unfortunate condition of affairs in Siam. During the last two or three years we had made concessions to France in almost every quarter of the globe. We had abandoned not only this great territory in Siam, but the late Government gave up the whole of the Hinterland in Sierra Leone.

Sir C. Dilke said the Under Secretary of State, in his reply, had referred to the speech of the hon. member for Monmouthshire as a mellifluous speech. He thought that speech was a very good one, and put the case admirably. The right hon. gentleman had actually denied that night that the river Mekong flowed through the province of Yunan; he thought the right hon. gentleman, since he had come into office, must have lost that accurate knowledge of Siam which he once possessed.

Mr. Curzon said the right hon. member had misunderstood him.

Sir C. Dilke said the right hon. gentleman might forget what he had said; but it was as he had stated, and his hon. friend beside him was perfectly accurate in the statement he had made. He agreed with what had fallen from the late Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs as to this agreement. The right hon. gentleman the present Under Secretary had said that this treaty was popular with the Government of India, the Government of Siam, and the British merchants, and that those were the parties principally concerned. The Government might be to some extent satisfied with that part of the treaty which dealt with their side of Siam, but as regarded the other two parties, he doubted if the right hon. gentleman had represented the facts of the case. Although one or two traders having financial interests in the centre of Siam might have professed satisfaction with the treaty, he very much doubted whether the Chambers of Commerce were satisfied with the arrangements which had been made. He had read translations of the publications of the Siamese Government as to this agreement, and so far from expressing their satisfaction with this treaty, they said that they hoped for the best because they were advised by their Legations in Paris and London that nothing better could be done for them. The tone of that statement was not that of satisfaction. There were several clauses which were peculiar and exceptional in this treaty. There was the clause about Tunis, and about the Lower Niger, and it was difficult to explain why those clauses appeared in this treaty at all. Who was to be pleased by these clauses being put in? Arrangements with regard to the delimitation of our territory on the Lower Niger were taking place before this treaty was signed. The reason why the Tunis clause and the Niger clause were put into this Siamese arrangement must have been to make this thing more pleasant to French feeling than it would have been without these clauses. Of course, there were make-weights in the treaty in our favour. For instance, there were those clauses in it which gave us rights in China which France had obtained for herself under her treaty with China. The hon. gentleman had read to the Committee the actual words of the clauses, and showed that the rights conferred upon France by the terms of her treaty with China were rights that were peculiar to France and were limited to her alone, and that therefore they could not be transferred even by France herself to Great Britain. France had annexed to the treaty a declaration intended for home consumption, which showed that we could obtain no advantages under those rights so transferred to us. No doubt these clauses, which purported to embody the agreement arrived at between the two countries had been considered by Her Majesty's Government and the French Government, and had been drawn up with the view of pacifying the French, but he was afraid that that object had not been attained. With regard to Siam, the treaty had been entered into, and all that we could do now was to endeavour to make the best of it. One complaint he had to make was that the Foreign Office did not give the country the information with regard to the territories under its control that the Colonial Office did. If they had received as much information with regard to the Niger as they would if the territories had been under the control of the Colonial Office, they would have known more of the communications which had passed during the last few years between the Niger Company and the French Government.

Mr. H. Labouchere said he did not know that he so entirely agreed with the right hon. gentleman sitting by his side with regard to the Siamese question as he did in regard to some other matters. This question of the frontiers, to use a vulgarism, never "caught on" in England, and, indeed, no one cared very much about it. Inasmuch as nobody seemed to know whence the Mekong came and whither it flowed, it did seem absolutely ridiculous to think that under the late Government we were within an inch of war upon some question as to the frontier that should be drawn on one side or other of this river. The right hon. gentleman opposite asked why it was that a vote of want of confidence had not been proposed from the Front Opposition Bench in regard to the action of the Government upon the Siamese question. The reason was that if anyone had got up on that Bench and moved a vote of want of confidence in the Government because they had come to what he called a reasonable settlement of this question, he would find himself in a minority, even on the Bench on which he sat. He congratulated the Government in having been wise in this matter, and his only regret was that they had not applied to other parts of the world the principle they had applied to the

settlement of the Mekong difficulty. Complaint was made that although better relations had been established with France in Asia, the effect of that had been weakened by the action of Government elsewhere. He was sorry that was so; but still, he thought, so far, so good, and he was glad to think that if we were not entirely in harmony with France in Africa, at least, thanks to the present Government, we were in harmony with her in Asia. As to Siam, we had no more right to Siam than the French. First we took Lower Burma, then we took Upper Burma, and because we did so we came to the conclusion that we had special rights in Siam. If we acquired any rights in Siam for having stolen a province on one side, surely the French had acquired the same rights by stealing a province on the other side. (Laughter.) He would have preferred to see both the French and English Governments leave the Siamese to themselves. He was altogether opposed to European Governments going about in this grandiose way and annexing territories nominally in the interests of civilisation or Christianity, or for the purpose of putting down plurality of marriages—(laughter)—whereas, in reality, they wanted to steal other persons' goods. Both the English and French Governments had cast their eyes on this Naboth's vineyard, and he was, therefore, very glad that instead of foolishly going to war, the Government had come to a reasonable agreement in the matter. He had not the slightest idea as to the merits or any of the details of the question. He could not even follow the names of the different places alluded to; but he did say that whenever a Government—he did not care whether it was Liberal or Conservative—substituted for bullying and threatening and declarations of possible war, a fair and reasonable negotiation based on the give and take principle, with an ultimate proposal for arbitration, that Government would have his support.

Mr. REGINALD MCKENNA said that the right hon. gentleman opposite had attacked him for asserting that the Mekong was a possible waterway for commercial purposes. He now held in his hand a book, to a passage of which he would call the right hon. gentleman's attention. The book was published this year by a gentleman who had been in Siam and had been upon the Mekong himself, which was more, he believed, than the right hon. gentleman had done. He said:—"Bordering on the three Chinese provinces of Yun-nan, Kwang-si and Kwang-tung, and within easy reach of Szu-chuan, they possess in the two important waterways of the Songka and the Mekong unrivalled facilities for penetrating into the heart of China."

March 30th.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THE MANUFACTURE OF CORDITE.

Colonel LOCKWOOD asked the Secretary of State for India whether any cordite had been manufactured in India for use by the troops there.

Lord GEORGE HAMILTON: As yet no cordite has been made in India; but its manufacture is under consideration.

THE INVASION OF KAFIRISTAN.

Mr. HERBERT ROBERTS asked the Secretary of State for India whether any arrangements had been made by the Indian Government to afford an asylum in our territories, or in those under our influence, for the Siah Posh Kafirs who had escaped from the Afghan invaders:

Would the nature of any such arrangement be indicated to Parliament:

And whether His Highness, the Amír of Kabul, had caused 16,000 of the Kafirs to be deported and distributed amongst the local authorities in Afghanistan.

Lord GEORGE HAMILTON: As I stated on the 20th February, certain Kafirs have sought refuge in Chitral, where they and others who have joined them are being assisted and settled upon small grants of land by the Mehtar on condition that they observe the usual terms on which asylum is granted. I have no information that is in any sense reliable as to the number of Kafir prisoners or the treatment of them in Afghan territory, but judging from what we know of the total number of the population of Kafiristan it is highly improbable that any such number of prisoners have been deported.

Sir C. DILKE: Is there no news since February, the date named by the noble lord?

Lord G. HAMILTON: I stated that since February 20th we had received information as to further attacks having been made. But all the figures which have been published in connexion with these attacks are supposed to be quite untrustworthy.

BRITISH SOLDIERS IN INDIA.

Mr. DUNCOMBE asked the Secretary of State for India, in reference to the alarming statements made in the Annual Report of the Sanitary Commissioner to the Government of India for 1894 as to the prevalence of venereal diseases in the Indian army, and which statements were admitted to be true, what steps he proposed to take to remedy the evil.

Lord GEORGE HAMILTON: The growth of venereal disease in the Indian army consequent upon the abolition of the previous protective measures against it, has been a source of great concern to the Government of India, who report that it prevails "to such an extent as to constitute a most serious cause of inefficiency in the army." The Government of India are considering what instructions or regulations it may be possible for them to issue to mitigate this scourge, and without infringing the restriction imposed upon them by the Resolution passed by this House upon this subject.

Mr. DUNCOMBE: Is there any possibility of that Resolution being rescinded? (Ministerial cheers.)

No answer was returned.

April 10th.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

EAST INDIA LOANS.

East India (Loans raised in England).—Copy presented, of return of all loans raised in England chargeable on the Revenues of India, outstanding at the commencement of the half-year ended 31st March, 1896, &c. [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

PETITION.

Mahárájá Jalim Singh.—Petition from Jallahawad, for restoration to power; to lie upon the Table.

BRITISH INDIAN SUBJECTS IN SOUTH AFRICA.

Mr. M. M. BHOWNAGGREE asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether his attention had been drawn to a proclamation published at page 215 of the *Natal Government Gazette* of the 25th February last, in which, under the heading "Rules and Regulations for the disposal of Erven," or sites, "in the township of Nondweni, Zululand," at clauses 4, 13, 18, 20, and throughout the proclamation, words were used which would effectually preclude all the British Indian subjects of Her Majesty from acquiring or occupying land within that township for purposes of business or residence, while enabling others, who were not subjects of Her Majesty but because they were "persons of European birth or descent," to do so: whether similar prohibitory provisions had been in force with regard to another township called Eshave since 1891; whether he was aware that only two years before that time, in 1889, British Indian subjects were not allowed to purchase land in the township of Melmoth to the value of nearly £2,000; and, if so, whether any cause had been shown for now precluding them from the exercise of a similar right in reference to the townships of Eshave and Nondweni; and whether, as such prohibition constitutes an interference with the right of British subjects to acquire property in any part of Her Majesty's dominions, based merely on the question of colour, and thereby constituting a direct violation of the gracious assurance given by Her Majesty to the people of India in 1858, he would take immediate steps to arrest legislation of this description by the Governments of Natal and other parts of Her Majesty's dominions in Africa, and order the elimination of all such regulations with regard to the townships of Eshave and Nondweni as preclude British Indian subjects from acquiring property therein.

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN: The proclamations relating to the townships of Nondweni and Eshave do, as stated by the hon. member, exclude those who are not of European birth or

descent from purchasing or holding land, but the purchase of land by British Indians at Melmoth in 1889 does not appear to have been reported to the Colonial Office. I have been informed that a petition on the subject from the Indian community of Natal, dated March 11th, is on its way, and I propose to give the subject my careful attention when the petition arrives.

LASCAR SEAMEN.

In Committee of Supply on the Vote to complete the sum for Post Office packet services,

Mr. W. ALLEN asked how it was that the one line of Steamship Companies which employed almost exclusively Lascar seamen got the whole patronage of the Post Office in the matter of over-sea mail contracts. The "Fair Wages" Resolution required that a fair rate of wages should be paid by those who secured Government contracts, but these Lascar seamen were employed at a rate of wages which English seamen would not for a moment accept. The Government were in a specially advantageous position for dealing with this matter because they had a director of the P. and O. among themselves.

Mr. JAMES LOWTHER said that the Government were asked to prevent the employment of British subjects. ("No, No!")

Mr. JOHN BURNS: It would save time if I point out that the difference between the right hon. gentleman and myself is not so large as his speech would indicate. I did not ask for the total exclusion of Lascars and coolies who were subjects of the British Empire. What I protested against was the proportionately large number of Lascars and coolies employed on British steamers which received subsidies from the Post Office.

Mr. JAMES LOWTHER said, that if the hon. member confined his suggestions to the limited extent of the non-employment of persons who were not subjects of the Queen, he was with him. But he should not be prepared to draw a distinction between one British subject and another in a matter of this kind. He thought that a much healthier public opinion prevailed now than was the case some time ago with regard to those subjects. He did not think that they would be met by the old argument that the interests of the consumer and the taxpayer should be solely considered. He hoped it would be acknowledged that the duty of the Government was first of all to protect the interests of British subjects, and not the supposed interest of the taxpayer, at the expense of the larger interests of the Empire as a whole. He trusted that the Government would give an assurance that the spirit of the Fair Wages Resolution would be enforced in respect of shipping contracts and the employment of persons who were not British subjects. Was it the case that payments were made to shipping companies other than those which sailed under the British flag? If the contracts were knocked down to the lowest bidder, and foreign steamship companies were to obtain the money of the British taxpayer, he should look upon the policy as most mischievous. The Government should, therefore, take care that in the disposal of Government contracts the interests of British labour and truly British interests were jealously safeguarded.

Mr. A. GRIFFITH-BOSCAWEN said, that the hon. member for Battersea had raised a very important question, and he thought it was a matter on which Conservatives ought to support him. He had travelled on steamship lines on which English labour alone was employed, and by those, like the P. and O., which employed a great deal of Lascar labour. [Mr. J LOWTHER: "British subjects."] No, not all of them. At all events a great deal too many Lascars were employed, and it was little short of a scandal when they were deploring the disappearance of British sailors all over the world, that as much encouragement as possible should not be given to their employment, at least in those steamship lines which received heavy Government subsidies. It had always appeared to him to be wrong that the P. and O. Company should have a large preponderance of contracts, and at the same time should be allowed, notwithstanding the protest of the colonies, and other parts of the Empire, to employ a vast amount of foreign coloured labour on their ships. They ought not to exclude the labour of their fellow subjects, even if it be coloured labour. The P. and O. Company had contracts between this country and India and Australia. He could not see that it was a hardship to employ Lascar labour provided it was the labour of our own subjects carrying the mails to India; but it was a hardship if such labour was employed on ships going to Australia. The Orient line employed English labour only. Their ships were excellently managed and gave satisfaction to the colonials and others. The colonials held a strong opinion that the P. and O. ships should be manned by British labour only, exactly as the Orient ships were. He hoped that the next time the contracts were made the Government would insist, as far as the Australian contracts were concerned, that the views of the colonials were attended to. There should be a clause inserted that only British and Australian labour should be employed on all the mail steamships in future.

Mr. A. D. PROVAND asked the right hon. gentleman to appoint a Committee without delay to take into consideration the whole question of these mail contracts. The Committee of 1849 said in their Report that when tenders for carrying mails were asked for, ample notice and full particulars of the terms and conditions of the service required should be given to the public, as that was the most likely way to secure real tenders by responsible bodies. In 1877, the then Postmaster General gave a pledge that ample time would be given to competitors to send in offers to carry out the service then required, but in flagrant violation of that pledge, when the tenders were asked for only a month's notice was given. No new firm could possibly prepare to tender in so short a time as that. It appeared as if the Post Office intended to pursue the same tactics now. In 1885 and 1886 the same thing was done but in another way. The Post Office first of all asked for a tender for seven years, and when tenders were sent in they altered the proposed seven years' contract to a ten years' contract. But they gave no notice of the alteration to the various tenderers and merely notified it to one—the P. and O. Company. They asked that Company to tender again for the ten years' service, and of course, in the circumstances, no competition was possible. In the present case there was only an interval of two years before the new service must commence. There were no doubt, some difficulties in connection with the tenders for the Australian service, because the colonial governments joined with us in paying the subsidy; but there were no difficulties of the kind in connection with the Eastern service to India and China, because that was paid for exclusively by ourselves. The new contract, if it was to be for ten years, would involve a very heavy outlay. At present the P. and O. Company received £1,000 of public money daily for carrying the mails. The subject was one which ought to be referred at once to a Parliamentary Committee composed of business men. A Departmental Committee would be useless; in fact, nobody would dream of paying any attention to the decision of a Departmental Committee, considering the way in which the Department itself had behaved on former occasions. Allusion had been made to the black men employed in P. and O. steamers. These came from Abyssinia and various parts on the Red Sea, and were not British subjects. At the Post Office simple business matters were transacted in a way that made one think that the officials had no business knowledge at all, and their methods were very bad for the taxpayers. The action of the Post Office in the past had resulted in the establishment of a monopoly for the benefit of the P. and O. Company, and unless the Department invited tenders now under reasonable conditions, that monopoly would be maintained.

Mr. T. M. HEALY, in the course of his speech, said that with regard to the employment of Lascars, he would remind the Committee that in a sailor pluck and courage were desirable. Something more was wanted than mere readiness to serve for eighteenpence a day.

Mr. R. B. HALDANE said that, as regarded the Fair Wages Resolution, he was entirely at one with his hon. friend the member for Battersea; but questions of fair wages had nothing whatever to do with questions of nationality. He noticed with some concern that the right hon. gentleman the member for Thanet seized hold of the Fair Wages Resolution to bring in the question of the employment of foreign labour. His own opinion emphatically was that this question of fair wages had nothing in the world to do with the employment of foreign seamen, though, of course, administrative considerations might arise in connection with the subsidising of a great line of mercantile marine ships. He trusted that the right hon. gentleman would not say that those on his side of the House, at any rate, desired that the Government should embark on a policy of excluding in all its contracts the employment of any sort of foreign labour. At the same time he hoped it would be made perfectly clear that there was no disposition in the House of Commons to go back on the principle of the Fair Wages Resolution.

Sir THOMAS SUTHERLAND, in the course of his speech, said that in the first place he wished to disabuse the minds of hon. members who had listened to the hon. member for Battersea, with regard to one question—namely, that mixed crews were made use of from a motive of economy. He could assure the House that that was not the case. As a matter of fact, mixed crews were in reality considerably more costly than entirely European crews. The type of vessel which carried the mails to India or Australia would carry upwards of 200 hands—about 220. Of that number upwards of 80 would be Europeans or Englishmen, and the balance would be composed entirely of Lascars or Africans.

Mr. BURNS: Portuguese.

Sir CHARLES DILKE: Are you including stewards?

Sir T. SUTHERLAND: Yes; stewards and engineers. The cost of such a crew would be actually greater than the cost of an entirely European crew, which, however, would of course be smaller in point of numbers. This matter had to be dealt with from the point of view of practicability, and those who had to deal with it were confronted with the fact that in navigating the Eastern seas European labour was by no means so efficient as that which was made use of. To show that what he said was not spoken without experience, he might mention that when the Company with which he was connected began to run their vessels through the Suez Canal, they manned their ships with European crews; and the reason why they abandoned that practice and took to employing mixed crews was that they found the European crew in the Indian and China seas were not nearly so efficient as they were in European waters. He did not say it would not be possible to secure efficient European crews in the case of ships navigating the Australian seas; but the reason why ships so engaged were run with mixed crews was that they could not be retained for service with one particular line, and must take their share in all the work the Company had to do. The experience of his Company with British seamen was very unfortunate, for it was by no means a rare thing, when first they began to run through the Suez Canal, for a ship to arrive at her destination, Calcutta for instance, with half her crew in gaol. If the House of Commons chose to pass a law to prevent the employment of Lascars, it would not be of the smallest consequence so far as his interests were concerned; but so far as the navigation of ships in the Eastern seas at a high rate of speed was concerned, it would be a matter of the greatest possible importance. He could not conceive how the House could possibly attempt to interfere with the employment of British subjects as sailors any more than as soldiers. He contended that the training of the Lascars was as good, if not better, than the great majority of men now employed in steam vessels. It was a well-known fact in maritime history that when the Charter of the East India Company came to a close, the vast trade then existing, and which had increased so much now, fell into the hands of a class of vessel which was manned exclusively by Lascars; and the Company with which he was connected, when it first started on its very considerable enterprise in the Far East, obtained its whole staff from these ships. He trusted he would do no harm by thus stating what were the actual facts of the case—namely, that motives of economy had nothing whatever to do with the employment of Lascars, and that the system of entirely European crews had been tried and found unsuccessful. If they were to deal with this question from the point of view of the fair wages resolution, how would it work out? They had two sets of men employed upon these vessels. The vessels started in one direction from England and in the other from India, and there could be no doubt whatever that the men starting from England were paid the wages current in the trade. The point was whether the wages current in the trade in England should apply to the men starting from India and who were natives of India. If that were done, it must shut out all the latter from employment in this service. Would it be fair in this way indirectly to exclude their British fellow-subjects? (Hear, hear.) They must recollect too, that a large portion of this subsidy—namely, something like £72,000—and, therefore, a large part of the wages of the sailors, was paid by India. In these circumstances, it would not be fair to lay down a rule which would shut out of the service of these vessels their fellow-subjects in the Indian Empire. (Hear, hear.)

Sir CHARLES DILKE observed that there was one point upon which the Secretary to the Treasury had been silent in his reply, and that was as regarded the military argument. No doubt it was not the right hon. gentleman's business; but it was the business of the House, and the First Lord of the Admiralty ought to be consulted on the matter in that respect before the tenders were settled. The country had a reserve of really good British seamen, only in the passenger lines, which were very largely mail contract companies. The Cunard and other lines running across the Atlantic, and great lines such as the Orient, were the homes of good British seamen, and the nominal force of British sailors in the world was merely a nominal force except as far as these great companies were concerned. They were told they had great numbers of British seamen, but the numbers included stewards and all classes of people and even loafers. He believed he himself figured in these returns, because if a passenger travelled by a steamer which was not a passenger steamer, he was bound before he could so travel to ship as a member of the crew. He knew that on one occasion a distinguished *Times* correspondent, Miss Shaw, had been borne as a British seaman because she had to ship in a non-passenger steamer in travelling to a distant part of the world. The real reserve of British seamen was to be found in the great passenger and naval lines. As regarded the further East where, undoubtedly, they might need many of these fast cruisers suddenly in the time of war, they would have to face the Messageries steamers which were manned almost exclusively by French men-of-war men. He was bound to say, with all respect to the very high qualities of Lascar crews, that they could not look to a Lascar crew to man one of their fast steamers in time of war so as to enable her to compete on equal terms with French steamers manned by men-of-war men. The officers of the mail carrying steamers in most cases belonging to the Naval Reserve, but the crews under them were composed of Lascars. The Chairman of the P. and O. talked about mixed crews. They were not mixed in that sense of the word. The Europeans on board were the officers and the quartermasters, but there were no European seamen on board the ships at all which were manned by Lascars. He hoped before the contracts were renewed some arrangement would be come to between the Admiralty, and the Board of Trade and the Treasury as to what, in future, should be the composition of their crews. He quite agreed with the Secretary to the Treasury, it was impossible to make any rule excluding Lascars, and no doubt this matter would be settled by a compromise of some kind on that head. But when the Secretary to the Treasury suggested that the P. and O. get these contracts, as against the Orient line because they were cheaper, then he had to reply that that cheapness was affected by the extent to which the P. and O. relied on exclusively Lascar crews, and the military argument was one which in this connection, ought not to be excluded.

Mr. J. H. DALZIEL observed that the Secretary to the Treasury had not, in his reply, stated, so far as the different companies were concerned, that the P. and O. got the particular contract after competition with opposing companies.

Mr. HANBURY: I believe that is so.

Mr. DALZIEL hoped that they would hear before the debate closed whether the right hon. gentleman adhered to that statement, and that it was not a matter of private influence and private arrangement. Another point was whether it was desirable that Lascars should be so employed. There was a very curious contradiction between the statement of the hon. member for Greenock and that of the Secretary to the Treasury. The former said it was not on the ground of economy these men were employed, but the right hon. gentleman on following entirely threw over the hon. member and said that undoubtedly there was economy in this matter, and that the Lascars were cheaper.

Sir T. SUTHERLAND explained that his statement was that on these ships a far larger number of Lascars were employed than if the ships were manned by European seamen; and that the total amount of wages paid on one of the steamers manned by a mixed crew was larger in twelve months than if it were manned exclusively by Europeans.

Mr. DALZIEL observed that after this explanation he could not, he was afraid, alter the view he had expressed. The hon. member said the employment of these men was not defended on the ground of economy, while the right hon. gentleman said that undoubtedly the wages paid to them were less in proportion than those given to British seamen. The right hon. gentleman wisely said that as India contributed a certain amount of the subsidy it would be unfair to prohibit the em-

ployment of natives of India. Quite so, but as the right hon. gentleman was willing to pay some deference to the opinion of India in the matter, why did he not carry out that view with regard to Australia? Whilst Australia contributed her proportion in the same way as India, the Australian people complained that their workmen were practically prevented from being employed on board these steamers. He thought there was a still more important view of this question, which was that the Secretary to the Treasury in a Conservative Government returned as the representatives and champions of British labour, should give a special pleading in favour of the employment of Lascars, because he could not come to any other conclusion. The right hon. gentleman did not give one hint that this subject would be reconsidered or that anything would be done when the contracts came to be considered. Thus they had the Conservatives and the Liberal Unionists, who in every constituency throughout the country issued bills containing the words "British Seamen, British Boilers, British Ships," when a question was raised affecting British seamen remaining silent in this great cause.

Mr. HANBURY: I distinctly stated that coolies were not employed, that all these were British subjects and I am not aware of any member on this side having said anything against putting our fellow British subjects in India in possession of a share of the privileges which we enjoy.

Mr. DALZIEL said that he entirely agreed with the right hon. gentleman. The right hon. member for Battersea did not claim that an undue exception should be made on behalf of British seamen, but what he asked was that an undue preference should not be given to Lascars simply because they worked for less wages than did British seamen. It was not a question of preference. All they asked was that they should have fair consideration in this matter. They had not only not had fair consideration, but they had not had anything approaching it. He was told that, so far as the P. and O. was concerned, two-thirds of the men employed were actually Lascars: and here they were asked to vote a sum, some £360,000 of which went to this Company, without a word of promise from the representative of the Government that this matter was going to receive attention. He hoped his hon. friend would go to a division, and then they would see how some of the hon. members opposite who, thoughout the country increased their majorities and won seats on a "British platform," would vote on this particular matter.

Mr. B. L. COHEN (Islington, E.) said he could inform the hon. gentleman at once how he should vote. If the hon. member for Battersea went to a division, he should vote against him. He was sorry that for the first time for a great many years an effort should be made from the opposite side of the House to import party spirit and party considerations into such a pure question of administration. He was not at all afraid to meet the hon. gentleman fairly and squarely on the issue he had raised. So far as he knew it had never been one of the planks of the Conservative and Liberal Unionist platform that they should seek to exclude from employment by the State the subjects of any portion of Her Majesty's dominions. It had been, perhaps almost exclusively, the doctrine of the Conservative and Liberal Unionist party to advocate Imperial interests as distinguished from anything which would tend to disruption and separation. If there was any vote in respect of which special consideration should be given to Lascars, surely it was the vote for that particular company—in which he was not directly or indirectly pecuniarily interested—which had done so much, by the improvement of the communication between the Indian Empire and the United Kingdom, to better the lot of the hundreds of millions of Her Majesty's Indian subjects. He understood his right hon. friend to say spontaneously that, although they could not, should not, and would not consent to the exclusion of Lascar labour, they did recognise that the subjects from the Australian colonies should receive their due share of employment on the lines engaged in those services. The hon. gentleman who had just spoken had instituted a comparison between the Orient line and the P. and O., but he did not seem to know that the Orient line carried no mails to India; while the P. and O. not only carried mails to India, but a large portion of the mails for Australia were carried on those vessels which were destined for Calcutta and Bombay. On the general question, he would like to say that he thought it was a little dangerous, quite apart from the question of Lascars or British seamen, for the Government of this country to interfere too much, or at all, in matters of administration between employers and employed. These subjects should be left to the contracting parties. He believed the duty of the Government was to let their contract on terms most advantageous to the British taxpayer, having regard to all the considerations which surrounded the granting of those contracts.

April 13th.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THE "IMPERIAL" INSTITUTE.

Mr. BHOWNAGGREE asked the Secretary of State for India whether the Government of India had largely increased their contribution to the Imperial Institute; and, if so, would he state the purpose for which the grant was made, and its total amount, and see that the money was devoted strictly to promoting the interests of Indian arts, industries, and economic resources by the expenditure being entrusted to a body of experts acting in consultation with Sir Frederick Abel, and not to the ordinary administrative officials of the Imperial Institute:

And whether he would place on the Table any correspondence that had passed on the subject between the Government of India, the India Office, and the Imperial Institute.

Lord GEORGE HAMILTON: The Government of India have increased their contribution to the Imperial Institute from £500 to £750 a year, with the object of promoting the interests mentioned in the hon. member's question. A committee of gentlemen of Indian experience has been appointed to cooperate with the staff of the Institute and to secure the application of this contribution to the purposes for which it was intended. I shall have no objection to the publication of the correspondence which has passed on this subject if the hon. member will move for it.

April 14th.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

INDIAN TROOPS FOR THE SUDAN.

Mr. BUCHANAN asked the Secretary of State for India whether the Government intended to bring troops from India to Suakin or elsewhere to join in the Egyptian expedition:

And whether he would secure that no part of the expenses was laid upon the Indian exchequer.

Lord GEORGE HAMILTON: I have no reason to believe that the Egyptian army will prove inadequate to the task it has in hand; and, until such assistance as is suggested in the question is required, it is obviously premature to discuss the incidence of its cost.

Mr. LABOUCHERE asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, whether any Indian troops of Her Majesty were under orders to go to the Sudan:

And, whether, if troops of Her Majesty were employed either to defend that portion of the Sudan now occupied by Egyptian troops or to replace any other portion of it now governed by the Kailifa under the rule of Egypt, the cost would be defrayed by Egypt or by this country.

Mr. CURZON: The first part of the question has already been answered in the negative by the Secretary of State for India. In reply to the second, should it be found necessary to employ British troops beyond Wady Halfa the cost of such operations will be matter for consideration and discussion between the British and Egyptian Governments.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: Do I understand that no action will be taken until the House has an opportunity of pronouncing on the matter?

Mr. CURZON: No such inference can be drawn from the reply in the form in which I have given it. (Laughter).

Mr. DALZIEL asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the 9th Lancers were under orders to proceed to the Sudan; and whether the Government adhered to their declaration that no British troops would be employed in the expedition to Dongola.

Mr. CURZON: There is no foundation for the report that the 9th Lancers are under orders to proceed to the Sudan. In reply to the second part of the question, I have nothing to add to or to substract from the reply which I gave to the hon. member for Newcastle-under-Lyme on the 27th of March.

April 16th.

HOUSE OF COMMONS:

MADRAS VILLAGE SERVICE ACT.

Madras Proprietary Estates Village Service (No. 2) Act, 1894.—Petition from Madras, for repeal; to lie upon the Table.

THE DURAND TREATY.

A BLUNDER OF THE "FORWARD SCHOOL."

Sir CHARLES DILKE asked the Secretary of State for India whether, in the recent Afghan operations, an invasion had taken place of portions of the Bashgal Valley, formerly tributary to Chitral, and without the sphere of influence of the Amír as settled by the Durand Treaty, they being also within the countries visited by Sir G. Robertson after the conclusion of that treaty:

And why the agreement with the Amír of Afghanistan, dated 12th November, 1893, published in the *Standard*, and in India in the *Bombay Gazette* of 21st March, and other papers, as laid before Parliament, had not been circulated to members.

Lord GEORGE HAMILTON: In the Durand Treaty it was originally proposed that the whole of the Arnawai Bashgal Valley should remain within the sphere of influence of the Indian Government. When the delimitation began in the field it was found that the Bashgal and Arnawai Valleys ran in different directions, the Arnawai draining into the Kunar from the east and the Bashgal River from the west. The frontier was therefore revised, and the revision placed within the sphere of influence of the Amír the Bashgal Valley, which is west of the Kunar River, and over which the Mehtars of Chitral have claimed rights. This included part of the country visited by Sir G. Robertson in 1890 and 1891.

The delay in circulating the papers which I laid on the Table on the 27th of March has been partly due to a misunderstanding, which I regret, and partly to the Easter holiday. The final order to circulate was issued to the printers on Monday last, and the book will be in the hands of members to-morrow I believe.

Mr. BIRRELL asked the Secretary of State for India whether the version of the Durand Agreement with the Amír of Afghanistan, published in the *Standard* of 1st April, 1896, and in other papers, was correct; if so, whether the attention of Her Majesty's Government had been called to the violation of the third article of that Agreement last November and December, when the Bashgal Valley was entered and taken possession of by Afghan troops, notwithstanding the stipulation that the Amír should not exercise interference therein.

Whether Her Majesty's Government would take steps to secure the restitution of the territory thus improperly acquired, and such reparation as was now possible for the slaughter and enslavement of the many thousands of Kafirs in a district which was specially included within the British dominions.

And, whether he would inform the House as to any action that had been taken by Her Majesty's Government on behalf of the people in those portions of Kafiristan which, by the Durand Agreement, had been assigned to the rule of the Amír.

LORD GEORGE HAMILTON: My reply to the question put by the right hon. member for the Forest of Dean answers all the questions put by the hon. member except the last. As regards the last I stated in reply to the hon. member for Darlington, on the 23rd of March, that the Viceroy would use any favourable opportunity of exercising his good offices on behalf of the Amír's Kafir subjects, and he is prepared to do so, but so far as I know no such opportunity has yet occurred.

THE MAHARAJA OF JHALAWAR.

Mr. HERBERT ROBERTS asked the Secretary of State for India, if he had yet received the final decision of the Viceroy with regard to the deposition of the Mahârájá of Jhalawar:

What opportunity had been afforded to His Highness to defend himself from the charges which had been brought against him:

And was he now able to lay upon the Table of the House any papers or correspondence relating to this matter.

Lord GEORGE HAMILTON: The papers containing the decision of the Government of India have been received within the last few days at the India Office. The Mahârájá Rana first gave his explanations to the political agent, was next invited to give them in December to the Governor-General's agent, was finally allowed to send them direct to the Viceroy, and was at every stage of the enquiry invited to explain and defend himself.

I am considering what papers can be laid on the Table of the House in connection with this subject.

THE VILLAGE SERVICE ACT.

Sir WILLIAM WEDDERBURN asked the Secretary of State for India whether the district collectors of the Madras Presidency were opposed to the extension of the Village Service Act (which formerly applied only to Rayatwari villages) to Zemindari and Devastanam villages; and, if so, on what grounds:

Whether this extension of the Act was based on the assumption that certain abuses of power by village watchmen complained of by villagers in Tinnevelly were prevalent in Zemindari and Devastanam villages:

Whether, on the Madras Landholders' Association pointing out that no such abuses prevailed in Zemindari and Devastanam villages, the Madras Government withdrew from the statement of objects and reasons the allegation on which the extension was founded, and yet proceeded to make that extension:

And whether, in view of the extreme unpopularity of this extension amongst the Madras landholders, he would request the Madras Government to reconsider the matter.

Lord GEORGE HAMILTON: The Madras Government report that the "district officers of Madras almost, if not quite, unanimously feel the absolute necessity of bringing the village servants in Zemindaris under control, in the way provided by the Act. They conjecture that the statement to the contrary refers to opinions recorded in 1871-75 upon another proposal."

Since 1882 the necessity of bringing village servants in Zemindaris under control has been under discussion; the necessity was held to be general, and by no means confined to Tinnevelly villages.

I do not find that the differences in wording between the "Statement of objects and reasons," as first framed in February, 1892, and the Statement finally published with the Act give support to the suggestion in the third clause of the question.

As at present advised, I am not prepared to act upon the suggestion in the fourth clause of the question.

MAIL PACKET CONTRACTS.

Mr. PROVAND asked the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster-General, whether he would agree to appoint a Select Committee of the House to consider the question of mail packet contracts for India, China, and Australia, and refer to it the tenders received in reply to the recent notices sent out calling for the same.

Mr. HANBURY said there were many objections to referring to a Select Committee tenders received for a mail packet service, and the House had already a very large control over those contracts before they were concluded. An inter-departmental committee had been appointed to make arrangements for the new contracts for the India, China, and Australian mail services, and the tenders for those services which had been recently invited would be considered by that Committee. No mail packet contract was binding till it had been approved by a resolution of the House.

April 20th.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

KYTHAL STATE.

State of Kythal.—The petition of Cis Sutlej, for enquiry, was ordered to lie upon the Table.

THE MAHARAJA OF JHALAWAR.

Mr. BHOWNAGGREE asked the Secretary of State for India whether he would furnish any information to the House with regard to the recent deposition of the Mahârájá of Jhalawar, and place upon the Table correspondence from the Government of India in that connexion.

Lord GEORGE HAMILTON: I have already announced the decision of the Indian Government upon this question, and if my hon. friend will move for the correspondence I shall be glad to give it.

THE INVASION OF KAFIRISTAN.

Mr. LEWIS FRY asked the Secretary of State for India whether any further number of the inhabitants of Kafiristan had taken refuge in Chitral since the statement made by him to the House on the 28th February; and, if so, what arrangements had been made for them:

Whether any representation in favour of the Kafirs had been made to the Amír of Afghanistan since the renewal of hostilties at the beginning of last month:

And, whether any answer had been received from His Highness on the subject.

Lord GEORGE HAMILTON: In answer to the first question, my information is that only two sons of a Lutdeh headmen have taken refuge in Chitral since March 1st.

In reply to the other questions, the latest information in the possession of the Viceroy is to the effect that the Amír has directed his officers to treat the Kafirs leniently, and not to convert them against their will. He has also prohibited traffic in Kafir slaves. No opportunity has therefore presented itself to the Viceroy for addressing the Amír on the subject.

DISEASE IN THE ARMY.

Mr. PRICE asked the Under-Secretary of State for War, whether his attention had been drawn to the favourable report of the Surgeon-General with Her Majesty's forces in India on the method of treating contagious disorders introduced to the Army by Surgeon-Captain F. J. Lambkin, A.M.S.:

And, whether, having regard to the serious spread of such disorders in the Army both at home or abroad, and the grave consequences both to the men and to the efficiency of the service, he would take steps to further investigate the value of the treatment, and, if found satisfactory, to extend its use.

Mr. BRODRICK: In the limited number of cases in which the treatment has been applied it has given good results; but I am informed that the remedy is not new. Further investigation will, however, be made, and if satisfactory results are obtained the system will probably be extended.

In answer to Mr. STUART,

Mr. BRODRICK said: It is the fact that, as regards the Army at home, the admissions for venereal disease, though still very high, have been lower in 1894 than in any year since 1879.

April 21st.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THE DURAND TREATY.

East India (North-West Frontier, Bashgal Valley).—Copy presented of Agreement signed by Mr. R. Udney, C.S.I., and Sipar Salar Ghulam Haidar Khan, joint commissioners for laying down the Afghan boundary from the Hindu Kush Range to Nawa Kotal, and confirmed by H.H. the Amír of Afghanistan on the 19th December, 1895 [by command]; to lie upon the Table.

THE "IMPERIAL" INSTITUTE.

On the motion of Mr. BHOWNAGGREE, an address was granted for "copy of correspondence relating to the contribution from Indian revenues to the Imperial Institute which has passed between the India Office, the Government of India, and the Imperial Institute."

OFFICERS IN INDIA.

Mr. HENNIKER HEATON asked the Secretary of State for India, why a step of temporary rank had not been given to Majors and Captains holding the appointments of Commandant and second in command of regiments under the Government of India, the same as was given in the *London Gazette* of the 5th November, 1895, to officers holding similar appointments in regiments under the Commander-in-Chief in India:

And, what orders had been issued in India on the subject.

Lord GEORGE HAMILTON: A few applications have recently been received for the grant of temporary rank to officers of the Hyderabad contingent, but for no others. I will communicate with the Government of India on the subject.

THE DURAND TREATY.

Sir CHARLES DILKE asked the Secretary of State for India whether he would at once lay before Parliament the revised agreement with the Amír of Afghanistan by which the Bashgal Valley was given to the Amír.

Sir WILLIAM WEDDERBURN asked the Secretary of State for India whether he would place in the Library a *fac-simile* of the map referred to in clause 1 of the Durand Agreement as being attached to that agreement, and also a *fac-simile* of the detailed map referred to in clause 3:

Whether he would lay upon the Table a copy of any document which sets aside the provisions of clause 3, and transfers the Arnawai or Bashgal Valley from the British to the Amír's sphere of influence:

Whether he would state approximately the length and breadth of the Arnawai or Bashgal Valley; and in what other respects, if any, the Durand Agreement had been modified:

And whether he would recommend the Government of India to depute Colonel Holdich, the Boundary Commissioner, or other suitable officer, to superintend the removal of those Kafirs who were being expatriated, and secure for them humane treatment.

Lord GEORGE HAMILTON: The maps referred to in the first question of the hon. baronet the member for Banffshire are inconvenient in size, and I have no spare copies, but I will have the line traced upon another map and place it in the Library.

I have here a copy of the agreement, dated April 9th, 1895, as signed by the Commissioners and subsequently ratified by the Amír, which I will lay on the Table.

I cannot give the information asked for in the third question at the present stage of negotiations.

In answer to the fourth question, I can only refer the hon. baronet to the reply given by me on March 23rd last to the hon. member for Darlington.

Sir C. DILKE: The noble lord speaks of the present state of the negotiations. Have we heard of any negotiations?

Lord G. HAMILTON: Yes, sir. After the Durand Convention was agreed to, an enquiry took place, and in certain places it was found that the topographical features of the country did not quite correspond with the terms of the Convention. Then various agreements have been entered into, and I think only two have been ratified by the Amír, including the one with regard to the Bashgal Valley. Further communications are going on with regard to the delimitation of territory in different parts of Beluchistan and Afghanistan.

Sir W. WEDDERBURN: Is not the Valley of Bashgal a very large one, and estimated to contain 40,000 inhabitants?

Lord G. HAMILTON: Oh, no. I do not exactly know the dimensions of the valley, but the total population of the whole of Kafiristan, at an extreme estimate, is 90,000, and the Bashgal Valley occupies quite a small portion of the territory assigned to Kafiristan.

April 23rd.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THE CHITRAL PAPERS.

Sir HENRY FOWLER asked the Secretary of State for India, whether any despatches or telegrams relating to the occupation of Chitral had been sent by the Secretary of State to the Government of India since the despatch of the Secretary of State of the 16th August, 1895:

And, if there had been any such despatches or telegrams, would he inform the House why they had been omitted from the Correspondence recently presented to Parliament.

Lord GEORGE HAMILTON: No telegrams or despatches except those relating to details of unimportance have been sent to the Government of India since 16th August on the subject of Chitral.

On the day upon which the correspondence alluded to was laid upon the Table of the House, viz., 27th March, a despatch was sent to India dealing with proposals for reduction of military expenditure in Gilgit, but the correspondence on this point is not concluded, as further experience of the recent changes is necessary before final arrangements can be sanctioned. If the right hon. gentleman wishes it, I will gladly show him these despatches.

THE "IMPERIAL" INSTITUTE.

East India (Contributions by India to the Imperial Institute). Return presented, relative thereto [Address 21st April; Mr. BHOWNAGGREE]; to lie upon the Table.